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Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 047396

IMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: NATO, NAC

SUBJECT:WASHINGTON NATO SUMMIT: FORMAT AND AGENDA

1. IN A TRIUMPH OF OPTIMISM OVER EXPERIENCE, WE WOULD LIKE TO STEER THE FORMAT OF THE WASHINGTON SUMMIT AWAY FROM 15 SERIATIM SET-PIECE SPEECHES, AND TOWARD GIVE-AND-TAKE DIALOGUE ON SPECIFIC AGENDA ITEMS. AS YOU KNOW, THIS HAS BEEN AN OBJECTIVE AT MANY PAST NATO MINISTERIAL AND SUMMIT MEETINGS; BUT MOST HAVE SLIPPED INTO THE SPEECHMAKING FORMAT. HEADS OF STATE AT THE
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1977 LONDON SUMMIT SPOKE IN FAVOR OF MORE INFORMALITY AND SPECIFICITY. IF WE ARE TO PROGRESS TOWARD THIS WIDELY ESPOUSED BUT ELUSIVE OBJECTIVE, DISCUSSIONS SHOULD BEGIN SOON AMONG PERMREPS WITH A VIEW TOWARD AGREEING ON STEPS TO BE TAKEN TO LIMIT ALL AND EVEN ELIMINATE SOME GENERAL STATEMENTS.
2. WE RECOGNIZE THAT A VARIETY OF FACTORS INCLINE SOME

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HIGH LEVEL PARTICIPANTS AT NATO MEETINGS TOWARD READING FROM PREPARED, "TOUR D'HORIZON" TEXTS:

-- SOME ARE NOT COMFORTABLE IN EITHER NATO LANGUAGE, AND DO NOT FEEL FREE TO SPEAK WITHOUT TEXTS.

-- SOME PREFER TO MAKE CAREFULLY CRAFTED STATEMENTS THAT ARE DESIGNED PRIMARILY AS PRESS RELEASES.

-- SOME FEEL CONSTRAINED TO READ INTO THE RECORD, PRIMARILY FOR HOME CONSUMPTION, STATEMENTS ON MATTERS NOT GERMANE TO THE AGENDA.

-- SOME REPRESENTATIVES OF VERY SMALL COUNTRIES WISH TO INTERVENE ONLY ONCE IN THE PROCEEDINGS, BUT WISH TO SAY ALL THEY HAVE TO SAY AT THAT TIME.

3. WE RECOGNIZE ALSO THAT THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE EAGERNESS OF ALLIES TO HAVE THE US REPRESENTATIVE STRIKE THE KEYNOTE FOR THE PRO-CEEDINGS WITH A WIDE-RANGING AND ALL-ENCOMPASSING STATEMENT HAS IN THE PAST MILITATED AGAINST ITEM-BY-ITEM DISCUSSIONS. ALLIED LEADERS, DESPITE GOOD INTENTIONS TO HAVE THE DISCUSSION FOLLOW THE AGENDA, HAVE OFTEN BEEN LED BY OUR INITIAL PRESENTATION INTO TOUR D'HORIZON REACTIONS AND REPLIES. ONCE ONE OR TWO ALLIED REPRE-
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SENTATIVES HAVE GIVEN GENERAL REACTIONS TO THE US SURVEY, OTHERS FEEL THEY TOO SHOULD FOLLOW SUIT BEFORE TIME RUNS OUT, AND THE AGENDA QUIETLY IS DISCARDED.

4. ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE ARE, WE BELIEVE, A NUMBER OF STEPS WHICH COULD LEAD TOWARD THE FORMAT GOAL THE MAJORITY SEEMS TO ESPOUSE. WHILE SOME OF THESE MEASURES HAVE BEEN TRIED, OTHERS HAVE NEVER BEEN GIVEN AN HONEST CHANCE:

-- DISTRIBUTION IN ADVANCE OF SET-PIECE STATEMENTS WHICH WILL BE INCORPORATED IN THE RECORD BY REFERENCE ONLY.

-- AGREEMENT THAT DISCUSSION WILL PROCEED BY AGENDA ITEMS AND THAT REPRESENTATIVES WILL RESTRICT THEMSELVES TO USE OF SEPARATE TALKING POINTS ON SEPARATE SUBJECTS.

-- REGISTRATION IN ADVANCE OF INTENTION TO MAKE SHORT PRESENTATIONS ON SPECIFIC AGENDA ITEMS, WITH THE RIGHT OF REACTION OR REJOINDER OPEN TO ALL.

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-- TARGET TIME PERIODS FOR DISCUSSION OF EACH
SUBJECT.

-- SPECIAL INTERPRETER FACILITIES TO PERMIT CERTAIN
HEADS OF GOVERNMENT TO SPEAK IN THEIR NATIVE TONGUES
DURING GIVE-AND-TAKE EXCHANGES.

5. IF MISSION PREFERS TO COMMENT ON THE ABOVE BEFORE
INITIATING DISCUSSIONS AMONG PERMREPS, WE WOULD
BE PLEASED TO HAVE THOSE VIEWS. COMMENTS FROM INFO
ADDRESSEES WOULD ALSO BE WELCOME. OTHERWISE, YOU SHOULD
TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY OF AN EARLY PERMREPS' LUNCH TO
DISCUSS THESE IDEAS WITH LUNS AND PERMREPS.

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6. IN YOUR DISCUSSIONS OF THIS WITH ALLIES THE QUESTION
IS BOUND TO ARISE OF WHETHER THERE WILL BE A RESTRICTED
OR INFORMAL SESSION IN THE WASHINGTON PROCEEDINGS. NO
DECISION HAS YET BEEN TAKEN HERE CONCERNING US PREFERENCES
ON THIS QUESTION. FOR YOUR BACKGROUND ONLY, YOU SHOULD
KNOW THAT PRESENT WASHINGTON THINKING LIES IN THE
DIRECTION OF THE SUMMIT BEING DIVIDED INTO: (A) PLENARY
SESSION(S) ON TOPICS FOR THE FIFTEEN; (B) PLENARY
SESSION(S) ON THE LTDP; AND (C) A SEPARATE, VERY INFORMAL
MEETING, FOR THE HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT TO
CONFER OFF-THE-RECORD REPEAT OFF-THE-RECORD. THIS
FORMAT, WHICH WOULD NOT INCLUDE A SEPARATE "RESTRICTED
SESSION" AS IN A MINISTERIAL MEETING, COULD MAKE IT EVEN
MORE DIFFICULT TO AVOID SET PIECE SPEECHES. NEVERTHELESS,
WE BELIEVE THE PLENARY SESSIONS WOULD BE RENDERED FAR
MORE MEANINGFUL IF PREPARED SPEECHES COULD BE GREATLY
REDUCED AND A GENUINE, AGENDA ORIENTED GIVE-AND-TAKE
COULD TAKE PLACE AT THEM.

7. THE ABOVE WAS DRAFTED AND CLEARED BEFORE RECEIPT OF
YOUR REPORT OF THE FEBRUARY 21 PERMREPS LUNCHEON. OUR
THINKING LARGELY COINCIDES WITH THE VIEWS EXPRESSED
BY CHARGE ON A PERSONAL BASIS AT THE LUNCH, NAMELY
THAT GOVERNMENT LEADERS HAVE THEIR OWN IMPERATIVES AND
IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO REGIMENT THEM ENTIRELY INTO A
TIGHT BUSINESS FORMAT. A FURTHER EXCHANGE OF PERMREPS
VIEWS WOULD STILL BE VALUABLE, WE BELIEVE, AS A MEANS
OF CUTTING DOWN IF NOT ELIMINATING THE PREPARED-IN-
ADVANCE TEXTS. IF ALL THE GENERAL STATEMENTS COULD BE
COMPLETED ON THE MORNING OF THE FIRST SUMMIT DAY, AND
IF ONE OR TWO LESS CENTRAL AGENDA TOPICS COULD BE
COVERED IN THE PROCESS, WE BELIEVE WE WOULD HAVE AMPLE
TIME REMAINING FOR FREE EXCHANGE AND TO-THE-POINT
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DIALOGUE ESPECIALLY ON THE IMPORTANT LONDON INITIATIVES.

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